

THE AMERICAN HUSBAND IN PARIS

ANNA · BOWMAN · DODD



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THE AMERICAN HUSBAND IN PARIS



"'Well, your George, as you call him, is a great man.'"

The American Husband in Paris

By

Anna Bowman Dodd

Author of

"Three Normandy Inns,"

"Cathedral Days,"

"Falaise," etc.

Boston

Little, Brown, & Company

1901

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1901

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UNIVERSITY PRESS · JOHN WILSON
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Chapter I

CONTINENTAL HOTEL. Large and expensive suite on second floor. Drawing-room faces Jardin des Tuileries. Room panelled in pink satin. Louis XV. furniture covered in modern tapestry. White and pink azaleas in vases. Shaded electric lights. Ballroom effect.

Enter MR. *and* MRS. GEORGE NASH, *of New York, followed by long line of porters bearing hand luggage.*

MRS. NASH, *pretty, slight, looking twenty-eight in smart tailor-made travelling-gown and coquettishly trimmed felt hat, twenty-five when in dinner costume, and forty when nervously prostrated or seasick.*

MR. NASH, *neither dark nor light, looks a worn fifty; in reality two years his wife's senior. Wears a suit of clothes three years old and his wrinkles with equal indifference. Quick, restless eyes, infrequent, nervous gestures, otherwise manner quiet and self-possessed.*

GEORGE

In the middle of the brilliant room with his hat on; pushes it slightly back, as he looks about him.

"Well! I call this pretty fine — don't you, Louisa? Rather a big price they'll ask for this outfit." (*Turning*

to waiter) "Avez-vous chambres—pettit — more pettit" — (*breaking down with a muffled d—n*). "I say, Louisa, ask him, can't you? if he has n't something a little less ducal. We 're not travelling with a carriage and four."

Waiter smiles above his correct white tie. Looks at Madame. Has assisted at too many such domestic comedies not to know what to expect.

Mrs. Nash takes no notice. Orders porters about, bustles in and out of drawing-room, ante-chamber, and bed-room. Recognizes chambermaid; has whispered conference with her. Finally remembers—after telling chambermaid what a dreadful passage they have had, and that she has n't brought May this year, and that she is perfectly exhausted —that George is somewhere, and has just said something.

MRS. NASH

"Oh — Ah — Yes — The rooms are nice, are n't they, dear? They 're the same dear, old rooms — the ones we always have."

GEORGE (*groans*)

MRS. NASH

"Why, George, what is the matter? Are n't you well?"

GEORGE (*airily*)

"Oh, I 'm as well as can be expected, after paying for a young palace like this — all these years."

MRS. NASH

Sotto voce, glancing apologetically at waiter.

"George, please do remember we are not alone — Hem!" (*To waiter, in French*) "You may go now, we 'll ring" (*waiter vanishes*). "Oh, George, how

could you? — he 's been here years; what will he think? — when they 've done everything so beautifully, too; put my favorite flowers about, in all the vases" (*sniffs at flowers*), "and re-covered the furniture, too. Is n't it too lovely? For the Exposition, I presume."

GEORGE

"I don't know for whom or for what they 've done it; but you 'll find, I guess, it 's we who 'll pay for it." (*Takes his hat off and looks dejectedly and resignedly about him.*)

MRS. NASH

Gives him a quick, experienced glance, as if taking stock of a mental condition not new to her. Steps lightly to window; exclaims in tones of artificial gayety:

"Oh, George, you must come; do look at the gardens; are n't they lovely?

So green and cool! How natural they do look. Everything is just as it used to be — if it is Exhibition year."

GEORGE (*examining gardens*)

"Well, you 'll find there will be one thing that won't be the same — this year."

MRS. NASH

Goes toward the largest mirror to take out her hat-pins.

"What won't be the same, George?" (*She is conscious of trying to be very patient with him.*)

GEORGE (*sententiously*)

"The bill!"

MRS. NASH

Turns quickly to face him as she takes out her hat-pins.

"George Nash, I won't have expenses mentioned — or — or — money. I told

you that at the beginning. This is a pleasure trip. When I come over, I make it a point, always, to forget everything — all the disagreeables."

GEORGE (*dryly*)

"So I've noticed — can't even remember when you've overdrawn your letter of credit!"

MRS. NASH

Again quickly diagnoses her husband's mood.

"George, I believe you're hungry — that's what's the matter with you! As for me I'm starved, that long railroad journey from Cherbourg always does take it out of me. No, not that, that's the curtain cord — it's there, over by the door, the third below the electric button — yes, that's it."

GEORGE (*rings. More cheerfully*)

"Well, little woman, I guess you're about right. I do feel a trifle empty." (*Enter waiter.*)

GEORGE

Fixing waiter solemnly with his eyes, but addressing his wife.

"Louisa, do they understand making an American cocktail in this hotel?"

WAITER (*in English*)

"Yessir. Wat zoo hav?"

GEORGE (*with great animation*)

"Two Martinis, and quick — do you hear?"

MRS. NASH

"George! you know I'm forbidden! — Waiter, waiter, bring some crac — some biscuits." (*Waiter nods knowingly and disappears.*)

MRS. NASH

With a sigh of relief, as she sinks into a fauteuil whose down pillows melt under her as if they were of water. Leans her head back. Suddenly remembers that George's worst fault, after talking about expenses, is his liking for cocktails. With great animation.

"George, I do hope you are going to give up your cocktail habit, now you 're over here. You know what the doctor said: No stimulants; only a little whiskey and water at dinner, and a light white wine at breakfast!"

GEORGE

"At breakfast! I have n't got that far yet, thank Heaven!" (*Chuckles softly as he settles his head against a Boucher shepherdess's sky-blue brocade, rubbing his head against the tapestry.*)

MRS. NASH

Wearily. George's coarser sense of humor as contrasted with her own exquisitely refined quality makes her constantly marvel at her own goodness to him.

"I suppose you think that's funny. But it is n't. Because, over here luncheon is always called breakfast — déjeuner à la — Oh!" (*she jumps up*) "there they are!"

(*Waiter enters, bearing tray*)

Mr. and Mrs. Nash simultaneously close in about both.

GEORGE

Lifting his glass, eyes his wife lovingly.

"Well, Louisa, here 's to our first trip abroad."

MRS. NASH

Reproachfully, gulping a little, as she tries not to swallow.

"And, oh, George, to dear May! How could you forget her?" (*They drink swiftly, both smiling now.*)

GEORGE

The first to deposit his glass. Fumbles in his pocket in answer to telegraphic signal from waiter's eye.

"Well, Louisa, I guess this hotel is all right. That 's as good a cocktail as I could get at Del's."

(*Exit waiter.*)

MRS. NASH

She has drained her glass. Rises and throws her arms impulsively about her husband's neck.

"Oh, George, I can't — I don't want to scold — or — or to find fault. I 'm

too happy. To have you here at last in this dear, little room — "

GEORGE (*rolling his eyes about*)

"Little!"

They both laugh. Louisa seats herself on the arm of his chair. Takes his head between her hands.

"You are such a goose, I have half a mind not to kiss you. There! Now behave, or I shan't, you goosie. How many more do you want? Oh-h, don't. You're pulling my back hair — the pinned part. Why I wear pins in my hair? Oh-h, every one does. And you gave me this one my last birthday — the diamond and pearl one, you know." (*She jumps up as if startled.*) "Why! who was that? Ah-h, Marie. Who's Marie? The chambermaid; been here years; perfectly devoted to us.

She adores May — dresses and undresses her." (*She reseats herself.*)

GEORGE

With his hands once more in position about his wife's waist.

"Well, you seem to be pretty much at home here, I must say."

MRS. NASH (*with emphasis*)

"I should hope I was; think of the years I've been coming over."

GEORGE (*a little sadly*)

"Yes, my dear, I remember them all."

MRS. NASH (*in a hurt tone*)

"George! how can you? You know it has only been for the children's sake; for Kirtie's and May's French; and to cure me of nervous prostration, or to get rid of the grip, or house-keeping, or

— or to economize, on clothes." (*Almost on the verge of tears.*)

GEORGE

Smiling indulgently, with eyes sparkling with suppressed laughter.

"Yes, yes, I know. Don't get excited, little woman. It's all right. I was n't reproaching you. Only, I do get lonely — sometimes. But it's all right. I 'm here now, sure enough. Shall have you all to myself, too. We 'll have a good time, too, together, won't we, old lady?"

MRS. NASH

She has the rapt look of one who has signed a compact with their good angel. Takes her husband by the coat lapel, and eyes him closely as she enunciates, with solemnity:

"George Nash, I 'm going to make you a well man — do you hear? It's

going to be my one sole object, this trip, to get that liver of yours to act, and to cure your insomnia."

GEORGE

The tired look on his face gone. He looks ten years younger as he clasps his wife (lightly kissing her).

"Well, I guess we'll have some fun thrown in."

MRS. NASH

Laughs. Suddenly stiffens, and sits upright. With conviction, as she looks towards bedroom.

"That *is* Marie!" (*Jumps swiftly to the ground, colors like a girl. To George, in a half whisper:*) "She saw us — you kissing me. She was watching; they all do; you can't trust one of them." (*Walks briskly towards open door, saying, in high, flat key:*) "Je viens,

Marie, justement je vous entendais " etc., etc.

GEORGE

Listens to his wife's French with fixed attention. Nothing seems natural to him save the flatness of her tone.

" Well, Louisa's got the lingo, sure enough." (*Meditates deeply on Louisa's many accomplishments. Looks round the room. Sees his hat. Finds it suggestive. Claps it on and moves towards entry door. Talks softly to himself.*) " I believe I will. By Jove! that Martini WAS good."

(*Goes out of door quickly.*)

Chapter II

NEXT MORNING. HOUR, NEARLY NOON

MRS. NASH'S bedroom presents a most disorderly aspect. Trunks yawn. Huge trays filled with tissue paper are perilously perched on Louis XIV. arm-chairs, marqueterie tables, and both beds. Open wardrobes and inner closets show closely serried lines of rich gowns. Hats, bonnets, new boots, laces, gloves, and ball-bodices are piled on top of mantel-pieces and bureaux.

MRS. NASH *in loose white peignoir, slightly flushed. Head is bowed over largest trunk.*

GEORGE *enters. Looks fresher, has a slight approach to color in his sallow cheeks. Seems in high spirits. Tosses his hat on top of lace ball-waist. Mistakes it for a pillow-sham.*

GEORGE (*airily*)

"Well, Louisa, — nearly ready?"

MRS. NASH

With head still engulfed in trunk hollow. Scornfully.

"Ready? It looks like it, does n't it?" (*Emerges with armful of fleecy underwear. Sorting these with fine energy into bureau drawers.*) "Some of us have something else to do besides flan-é-ing all over Paris."

GEORGE (*pricking up his ears*)

"Flannelling? What does that mean?"

MRS. NASH

With explanatory precision, from the furthermost depths of an inner closet.

"Flan-é-ing — American for the French verb to 'flâner,' to gape in shop windows and to — "

GEORGE

"I 'll make a note of it. Seems to be a good word. Well, things do look topsy-turvy. Why don't you call in the chambermaid? She 'll put things to rights."

MRS. NASH

In resigned tone, sorting dozens of silk stockings.

"That 's just like a man; I don't *own* Marie, George. In a hotel like this — "

GEORGE (*lightly*)

"Oh-h, I thought you did. The tip you gave her last night would buy most any of them, I should say."

MRS. NASH

Confronting him with dignity across pile of summer shirt-waists.

"I should think, George, I understand the system of European tipping by this time."

GEORGE (*whistling softly*)

"I guess you do, Louisa." (*He fidgets about. A short pause. Louisa spying her husband's hat on her best tulle bodice. Gives him a terrible look as she whisks hat off.*) "Are n't you most ready? It 's almost one; and I 'm as hungry —"

MRS. NASH

Forgetting her determination to say all she felt about his always misplacing HIS *things.*

"Why, George! You said you should n't want breakfast till past one — "

GEORGE

"That was before I had begun to realize my mistaken confidence in the café-au-lait system! A man can't go about Paris for three hours and not be convinced that these Frenchmen knew what they were about when they made eleven and twelve the national breakfasting hour."

MRS. NASH

Laughing in spite of herself. Turns despairing look about room. Sweeps armful of petticoats into an empty

trunk, making a place for her husband to sit down. As she proceeds to "do up" her back hair she asks pleasantly:

"By the way, where did you go this morning? You 've been gone hours."

George fumbling, with the awkwardness of a school-boy, with some laces near by. The white underwear, the open trunks, his idleness, Louisa dressing at high noon, recall his honeymoon, somehow. Has a strange, broken-loose feeling. He would like to kiss Louisa; but reconsiders rash impulse, experience having taught him women seem to be offish when "doing up" their back hair.

MRS. NASH

Coiling her long, light locks.

"Well, did n't you hear?"

GEORGE

As if awaking from a dream.

"Oh — Ah — Oh — I just wandered about. Wanted to see what the place was like."

MRS. NASH

"Geor-ge, how could you? When you knew how I had counted on being with you from the very first — sharing your very earliest impressions."

Mrs. Nash's sense of personal loss in witnessing the effect her beloved Paris would make upon her untravelled better half was so poignant that she "did" her coil without raising her hand-glass. She pinned the knot by feeling.

GEORGE

More and more conscious of a large, gnawing emptiness.

"Oh! there 'll be impressions enough

to go round, I dare say. Aren't you most ready?"

Mrs. Nash, after giving not more than twenty-five minutes to putting on her costume, bonnet, etc., and ten to carefully pinning on her veil, leans her face towards her husband.

"Do I look nice?"

GEORGE (*rising; he kisses her*)

"Sweet as a peach; prettiest woman in Paris — and the youngest."

MRS. NASH

With the smile of one who has received her deserts.

"It *is* nice having you over, Georgie dear —" (*kisses him lightly*). "But — what are you looking for?"

GEORGE

Fussing about among the hats and gloves on mantel-piece.

"Where *is* that Baedeker? I laid it down here — I could swear."

MRS. NASH

With a little scream of scorn.

"Baedeker? Why, you poor, misguided dear, what in the world would you be doing with a Baedeker?"

GEORGE (*innocently*)

"Why, after lun— breakfast, I mean, we 're to do some sight-seeing, are n't we?"

MRS. NASH (*with a sinking feeling*)

"Sight-seeing? Why, yes, of course — we can, I suppose, only — "

She stops. Her emotions prevent further utterance. The thoughts of all

she had counted on doing almost hurt, there were so many of them. She had telephoned Mademoiselle Mathilde, her particular ally at Paquins', she would be there at two, to order some gowns she *must* have at once; she was positively ashamed to be seen even driving in the things she had brought over — not a gown but was at least six months old — skirts had changed so! At four she had expected to take a hurried look at Virot's hats, and have just a few sent in on approval. Then to the Louvre, for odds and ends; and there, at five, she had thought George might call for her, when they would take a turn in the Bois, just to see who was in Paris. With all this to be done, how could George be so absurd as to expect her to go sight-seeing, and the first day in Paris, too! Really it was too absurd.

GEORGE

Continuing to eye her, as if he were reading her thoughts. Smiles as if amused at what he read.

"Well, what 's up, old lady? Out with it! Anything to prevent?"

MRS. NASH

In her turn reading her husband's face. Quickly decides to give up everything, and make a martyr of herself.

"Oh, no, dear, there 's nothing to prevent; we 'll do as many sights as you like, only, please, no Baedeker. That would be a little too much. One might as well be a 'Cook.' Besides, I 've done them all, again and again. I 'll be your Baedeker." (*Sweeps ahead of him out of room towards lift.*)

George watches his wife's perfectly fitting "Paquin" back in her six-months-

old-now-out-of-date jacket vanish into entry. Then pockets Baedeker.

MRS. NASH

As he joins her, pressing lift button.

"Dear me, we women now-a-days have to be up on our facts and dates, or our clubs would go to pieces."

GEORGE

Says nothing, but smiles. He also thinks. After emerging into lower corridor, remarks, with an air of great innocence:

"By the way, Lou, I was at the Place de la Concorde this morning, and stood just where Louis XVI. did when he was guillotined. Do you remember the exact date? 177– or '90, was it?"

MRS. NASH

Hastily, with almost angry vehemence.

"1776, of course; the veriest school-

boy knows that date. Why, if there isn't Mrs. Goodman! Who can she have with her?"

GEORGE

With animation, after suppressing laughter.

"That gentleman coming towards us is Chief Justice Goodman."

MRS. NASH

Excitedly, to large lady in youthful attire, bearing down upon them, followed by stately personage.

"Actually, Mrs. Goodman, you here! Already! I thought I should get the start of you this year. No, I have n't brought May with me this year. I 've brought my husband. Mrs. Goodman, let me present Mr. Nash. Ah! glad to make your acquaintance, Judge; heard so much of you! Yes, it 's Mr. Nash's first trip. Well, I hope

you are not going to martyrize your wife as George — as Mr. Nash — is me. Just think, Mrs. Goodman, we 're actually — going to the Exposition? Oh, dear me, no! Nothing as up to date as that. George — Mr. Nash — insists on doing Old Paris before he goes anywhere. Is n't it absurd? Do tell me, Mrs. Goodman, have you seen Mademoiselle Mathilde yet; and have the tight hip-skirts gone out? I heard — "

The two men now hear both ladies talking at once. All seated a few seconds later at same table. George whispers to waiter. A minute later the two gentlemen bow gravely over their cocktails. They drink solemnly, as if performing a religious rite.

THE JUDGE (*mentally*)

" He 's a younger man than I supposed he was; bad color, though."

(*Aloud.*) "Over here for pleasure, Mr. Nash?"

GEORGE

"No-o — and yes. My doctor seemed to think my time for Carlsbad had come."

THE JUDGE

"We all get there sooner or later."

GEORGE (*mentally*)

"First-rate, the Judge. Kind of man I like."

They talk during breakfast, deepening their tone to be heard above the ladies' stream of talk, in which the words Doucet, Raudnitz, Paquin, Mademoiselle Berthe, Mademoiselle Mathilde, Madame Paquin, Callot Soeurs, Virot, and "the new corset" recurred with the iteration of a refrain.

Chapter III

SIGHT-SEEING AFTER BREAKFAST

INSIDE Hotel Court. Mrs. Nash in bewitching Virot toque. Bought two months since at home, of "Juliette," with house-money; fruit of economies in early vegetables. Had felt she really must have one of Virot's "inspirations" in mixed violets and morning-glories. There were only six "originals" in New York. In spite of knowing her hat was "the thing" and immensely becoming (violets and a white dotted veil to a woman of the right sort will take off ten years, if worn in early spring), Mrs.

Nash also wore a shade of gloom on her pretty face. Doing her whole duty toward George she found somewhat depressing.

MRS. NASH

"Now, George, we 'll start" — (*with a sigh*) "there 'll be at least three whole hours before we can think of going to the Bois."

GEORGE (*briskly*)

"I 'd better get a cab, had n't I?"

MRS. NASH

Buttoning her glove with the air of an early Christian martyr.

"Ye-e-s, I suppose so; though, really, to go in a cab to the Bois — no one does, you know, except dukes and Americans."

GEORGE (*laughing*)

"Well, what are we?"

MRS. NASH (*with superior air*)

"Oh-h, I mean raw Americans — the kind one never sees except over here."

GEORGE

The patriot in him suddenly aflame.

"Really, Louisa Jane, I can't see but that one American is as good as another. I hate that snobbish — "

MRS. NASH

Deeply offended at being called by her baptismal name.

"You are forgetting yourself, George; had n't you better call a cab, than begin by calling me — "

GEORGE

Repentant, feeling he has n't been quite the gentleman.

"Perhaps you 'd rather have one of these things you spoke of this morning — 'Remeeses'?"

MRS. NASH

Quickly forgetting her ill-humor.

"Oh, George, that is nice of you—" (*Hardly waits to end sentence before attacking head porter. Bustles back in a trice with excitement.*) "George, are n't we lucky? Just think, François, the man we always have, May and I, you know, is free. Joseph 's telephoning for him now. I am *so* relieved; he's the best driver in Paris. I feel perfectly safe with François, and you know how timid I am."

GEORGE (*smiling*)

"I 've some notion of it. Let me see, how long is it since you 've let me drive you?"

MRS. NASH

In high good humor. Perceives François driving in.

"If you will prefer thoroughbred

colts to your wife's society—" (*Breaks off distractedly as carriage stops before them. Coachman in irreproachable livery touches hat with certain familiarity.*)

MRS. NASH

With foot on carriage step.

"Ah, François, ça va bien? et les petits?"

FRANÇOIS

Without touching his hat.

"Oui, Madame, Dieu merci. Madame se porte-t-elle toujours bien, et Mademoiselle?"

GEORGE (*impatiently*)

"What in thunder is he getting off? Tell him to drive on, and stop his rigmarole."

MRS. NASH

"Why, George, I was just asking about his wife and dear little children.

Dear me, how thoughtful he is. My cushion, the one I like" (*settles it into the small of her back*); "and here 's my card rack — and the mirror" (*takes it out of its case, rearranges the top of her veil, pulling it down under the chin*), "and — and everything. I always did love this carriage — it just fits my back. Now, George, confess this is nicer than a dirty public cab?"

GEORGE

"Well, yes; I think it is. I had one of the other kind this morning."

MRS. NASH

Turning quickly towards him.

"Where in the world did you go?"

GEORGE

"Oh, I took a turn around. I guess he drove me to the Arch de — what do you call it?" (*Pulls out his Baedeker.*)

MRS. NASH

Hastily putting out gloved hand.

"George, for Heaven's sake, not here." (*In excited scream as carriage stops.*) "Will you see where he 's brought us?"

GEORGE

Looking up towards flower-trimmed rows of windows.

"Well, what is there to see here? Looks pretty —"

MRS. NASH

Almost hysterically. Nothing but her strong sense of duty keeps her in her seat.

"My dear, it 's — it 's Paquin's!"

GEORGE (*jocosely*)

"Well, he keeps up pretty good style; he ought to, with the checks we Americans send over to him."

MRS. NASH (*quickly*)

"François, à la Conciergerie; et marchez vite."

FRANÇOIS (*with puzzled look*)

"Madame dit?"

MRS. NASH

"Conciergerie — l'autre côté de la Seine" (*as she sinks back among her cushions with the resignation of a suffering saint*). "I fancy François is the most astonished man in Paris."

GEORGE (*dryly*)

"You generally bring May over, I suppose, for Paquin to 'finish her.'"

MRS. NASH (*with lofty air*)

"Oh, we did all our sight-seeing years ago."

GEORGE

"Let me see. Years ago May was in baby clothes — she was only sixteen last June."

MRS. NASH

With unwonted animation, seeing the Towers of le Palais de la Cité across the bridge.

"George, look, there are the towers — and the Conciergerie — you know. Are n't they fine; so feudal and middle-age; are n't they? Every time I see them I seem to see the Paris of old feudal times, and the Revolutionary days. Poor Marie Antoinette was imprisoned here, you know, and from that window — "

A few minutes later François drives them past the towers.

GEORGE (*half out of carriage*)

"Umph, pretty good towers, these. They're something like — Where do you get in?"

MRS. NASH (*catching his coat-sleeve*)

"There's nothing to see inside — nothing."

GEORGE (*taking out Baedeker*)

"Umph, we'll see about that." (*Skims the leaves.*)

MRS. NASH

"George, dear, we'll go in another day; with all there is ahead of us, this afternoon we really can't." (*Takes his Baedeker out of his hand and hides it behind her back. Although it* IS *the other side of the Seine, there is no telling who might be going to the Bon Marché. To François, with her saint's voice.*) "À Notre Dame, François."

FRANÇOIS (*sotto voce to his horses*)

"Ah! mais, si on me fait trotter comme ça demain je file de bonne heure. Le vieux est assommant avec son guide."

In front of Notre Dame Mr. and Mrs. Nash alight.

MRS. NASH

"I 'll look in here, with you. It 's time for vespers. The singing is always so good here, and the incense — I do love the smell of incense. It 's so poetic, so — so religious somehow. I used to bring May once or twice a month; just for the influence, you know."

George inwardly resolves to keep May at home hereafter. Concludes good Americanism is what she needs. Is

beginning to understand a good many things that were dark to him before.

MRS. NASH

Now inside cathedral. Amiably, with desire to leave no stone unturned in her monument of duty.

"The cathedral, George, is Norman, with Gothic apse; the back view from the river is wonderful — all arches and flying buttresses. These arches — "

GEORGE (*with his head bent back*)

"How many feet high did you say it was?"

MRS. NASH

"George, how can you? What have feet to do with feeling? Can't you be satisfied with the — the vastness and mystery? and, oh, the color and gloom of it all!" (*She sighs deeply.*)

George's want of true sentiment is once again forcibly borne in upon her. It is in such moments as these that she feels that her finer sensibilities have been wasted; her artistic poet's soul has never found its true mate. George is dear, of course, but *so* American!

GEORGE

Longing really to see the great church.

"Louisa, is n't that young Richmond Trevise over there, with that pretty girl, and — ?"

MRS. NASH

Forgetting her lonely soul-life.

"Why, that 's the tall Miss King he 's with; and, yes, that 's Mrs. Trevise with them. It must be true; George, you just go about a little by yourself and I 'll run over and speak to Mrs. Trevise." (*Crosses nave, bowing prettily to altar.*)

George, entirely happy now, pulls out Baedeker. In ten minutes has seen choir, side chapels, has measured bays, calculated height of nave as contrasted with Old Trinity, inspected organ, old glass, and is ready for sacristy and the vestments; after which proposes to climb to roof to see gargoyles. Looks for Louisa. After waiting a good twenty minutes Mrs. Nash reappears.

MRS. NASH

"Ah, George, here you are! Won't you speak to— Ah! they 've gone out; I see —"

GEORGE

In bad temper, looking towards advancing figure.

"Ask the sexton, will you, to show us the sacristy. I want to see —" (*stalking towards cowled monk*).

MRS. NASH

"George! that 's a Franciscan monk; can't you see?"

Franciscan monk smiles. He is English. Passes on, clicking his sandals.

GEORGE

"All look the same to me. Where is the sexton, anyway?"

MRS. NASH (*with her superior air*)

"Sacritan they call them here. But it 's past the hour; they only show the treasures between ten and four." (*Leads way towards door.*)

GEORGE (*still cross*)

"If you had n't wasted a good half-hour on old Mrs. Trevise —"

MRS. NASH

"Half an hour! Why, I was n't gone a minute. I only had time to ask her — " (*As carriage drives up lifts her voice.*) "François, au Louvre."

When carriage turns into Rue de Rivoli George forgets his grievance.

GEORGE

"Why, Lou, how 's this? There are the Tuileries gardens again!"

MRS. NASH

With fatigued but patient smile.

"My dear, the Louvre is one end of palaces of which the Tuileries, before they were burnt, were the other. Really, I 'm beginning to think Baedeker would be a blessing, after all."

George produces his Baedeker. Mrs. Nash feels now as if she could put up with anything. Is sure one of her headaches is coming on. This trying to see all Paris in one afternoon would be too much for any woman's nerves.

MRS. NASH

Suddenly, with a cry, as carriage stops.

"Mais non, François, au Palais — Pavillon de Flore. Will you see where he has brought us?" (*Points exultingly to windows of Magazin du Louvre.*) "What a memory that man has! May and I always come here, the first thing, for gloves."

GEORGE (*with amused smile*)

"Seems to know the family habits pretty well, I must say. I know some men who would n't want him for their coachman."

Mrs. Nash has heard nothing. She feels as if she were turning her back on a paradise of bargains. "Vente aujourd'hui" — "Sale to-day" — stabs her, like a knife, from every window. Resolves she will get up early to-morrow morning, before George, and see if there are any good bargains left.

MRS. NASH

Soliloquizes mentally as she lies back among the pillows, gazing on vacancy.

"This bringing George over, after all, is perhaps a mistake. We might quite as well have gone to White Sulphur in March. And really, if I am to be dragged around like this, day after day, I shall be a wreck. Sight-seeing is the most exhausting thing; and when it comes to trying on! Oh, well! George must learn to go about by himself." (*Aloud, sweetly*) "George, dear, I thought

we'd take just one turn through the Louvre before going to the Bois."

GEORGE

"All right, my dear, anything you like." (*Mentally*) "We'll gallop through, I suppose, as we did through the church. Oh, well, I'll get up early to-morrow and see the thing thoroughly."

Chapter IV

THE LOUVRE

THE SALON CARRÉ as it was before recent changes. GEORGE *stops in middle of the great room. Looks about him with the air of a connoisseur. Makes a direct line for Leonardo's Lady. Stands before it in perfect silence.*

MRS. NASH *seats herself on long crimson bench; glances languidly at copyists. The originals, of course, she knows by heart. How many times she has had to climb those stairs and stand hours before Rubenses and Murillos till her*

back was nearly broken! But what will not a mother do for her child? May's taste had to be trained in art. And now she was about to resume her rôle of instructress to George! Lifts her eyes to Murillo's Madonna and feels she too should have had her apothe— was it osis or esis? By the way, where was George?

MRS. NASH

Recognizes her husband's back. Moves towards him.

"Well, George."

GEORGE (*not turning*)

"It's darker than I thought it would be; but that smile! It's a living thing, that smile, Louisa."

MRS. NASH (*much amused*)

"Why, George, how excited you are!"

GEORGE, *immovable, keeps on looking at Mona Lisa.*

MRS. NASH

Feeling herself rather slighted.

"Oh, well, if you don't care to talk about the pictures, I 'll go and sit down again." (*Keeps standing close beside him.*)

GEORGE (*rousing himself*)

"Oh, we 'll go on, if you like. But a picture like that, when you 've waited years to see it, does take hold of one." (*Looking up at Murillo in passing.*) "Yes, that 's a good one, too. But Leonardo has the feeling. There was never anything painted like that smile." (*Moves on, Mrs. Nash following.*) "Ah, what 's this? Gerard Dow, his 'Physician.' By Jove! Louisa, he was a painter. There 's a picture for you!"

MRS. NASH (*superciliously*)

"Oh, that Dutch school; I never could see much in those pictures, they 're so commonplace!"

GEORGE

Again absorbed in picture. Appears not to hear her. Studies picture minutely.

MRS. NASH (*in aggrieved tone*)

"When you 've done looking at that, George, you 'll find me on that third bench next to that second door."

Seats herself in front of Giorgione's "Concert." Murmurs to herself, "So like George to care about those stupid Dutch pictures! He is so practical. Dear me! I wonder why it is our men are so commonplace! Poor dears! I suppose it 's because they 're always grinding away at business. They 've



"'Why George! How did you happen to know so much about pictures?'"

no time for cultivating their minds or enlarging their tastes. Well, we women have our children, and our clubs, and Paris! If it were n't for them, I don't know what we should do! I suppose all American women feel a want — a void — somehow."

GEORGE

Comes towards her, still excited.

"Louisa! that Perugino — over there! Just look at those colors! As fresh as if laid on yesterday! Why can't our men get that pure tone?"

MRS. NASH (*opening her eyes*)

"Why, George! how did you happen to know so much about pictures?"

GEORGE (*smiles demurely*)

"Well, I ought to know something — I 've bought a few."

MRS. NASH

"Yes; but then you've never seen any masterpieces."

GEORGE

Again absorbed; this time in Leonardo's "Elizabeth."

"Oh, we get some good Rembrandts and Van Dycks at our Monthly Exhibitions, and the Metropolitan Museum has —"

MRS. NASH

Brightening; feels the mystery is solved. Remembers George has been on the United League Club Art Committee for YEARS. *Turns to him with pleased smile.*

"Well, George, you do seem at home here, I must say."

She reflects that he talks as well as Jannet, the young society artist who always "receives" her at the American

Artists' Spring Exhibition. Begins to feel novel pride in him. Bright idea occurs to her. Now she will know exactly where to send him later, when the "trying on" begins! Looks about, and finds George is off again. Sees Veronese's "Feast of Emmaus" directly in front of her. It recalls the famous Highsome Haines's "Costume Supper" of last winter.

MRS. NASH (*to herself*)

"Dear me, I think our New York women are much better looking than those Venetians! And the dresses — well — I don't know that the brocades were as good in color, but ours were newer. Yes, that was my gown, the woman to the left — Dear me, where is George? I want him to look at this and compare. Oh, he 's off again! That gold fillet, — dear me! it makes

me ache to think of the weeks I spent getting those pearls just right! Well, it was worth it. It was a stunner, that costume. Really, I ought to have had my portrait painted in it — so every one said!" (*Stops, as idea strikes her. Crosses floor rapidly. Clutches George excitedly by coat-sleeve.*) (*Aloud*) "George, I 've thought of something! You know you always wanted to have me painted — for the children."

GEORGE

Awakening as if from some dream (*he is in front of a "Raphael"*) *to an unpleasant reality.*

"Oh, have I? When? I don't remember —"

MRS. NASH

Impatiently. Idea is rapidly turning into decision to act on it.

"Oh, yes you do. Don't you re-

member, after seeing Sargent's portrait of Lillie Langbourne?"

GEORGE

Coming to all his senses.

"That was after Sargent was safely landed over in England. I recollect now."

MRS. NASH

"George, how can you, on so sacred a subject, — yes, it is sacred when a mother plans to leave her children a posterity picture."

GEORGE (*in mock anxiety*)

"You don't think of leaving us just yet, do you? Not before seeing the Exhibition, at any rate?"

MRS. NASH

Laughing in spite of herself. Links her arm lightly in his.

"Come, you old goosie, there 's the guard calling — it 's five o'clock."

GEORGE (*regretfully*)

"Oh, they shoo us out, like chickens, do they? What time do they open in the morning? Where *is* my Baedeker?" (*Fumbles in all his pockets.*)

MRS. NASH (*triumphantly*)

"In the carriage. I saw to that!"

Both laugh as they walk out.

Chapter V

THE OLD COAT

BEDROOM. Next morning, 10 *A.M.* MRS. NASH, *sleepily, from behind the blue damask bed-curtains.*

MRS. NASH

"Oh, George, must you open all those blinds? It's early yet, and I am so sleepy."

GEORGE (*re-closing shutters*)

"I suppose it is early — for Paris; but it's past ten o'clock."

MRS. NASH

Turning over on her pillow, drowsily.

"Wake me up at a quarter to eleven; will you, George? I 'm dead with sleep."

Sleeps an hour. Wakes to hear George in drawing-room. Hears clock strike. Jumps out of bed. Remarks great stillness in adjoining room. Listens. Becomes suspicious.

MRS. NASH

"What can George be doing as quietly as that?" (*Puts on peignoir and goes into drawing-room.*) "Well, if I ever!" (*Lifts her hands in protest.*)

Chairs and a sofa are covered with a motley array of coats, trousers, shirts, and underclothes. George in his shirt-sleeves taking a coat to the light and examining it.

GEORGE (*in a cheery tone*)

"I've been looking to see if that frock-coat of mine was all right." (*Inspects it carefully.*)

MRS. NASH

Joining him in inspection, with great disdain.

"That old thing! Why, you've had it ages!"

GEORGE

Looking at button-holes, with a great fear dawning on him.

"No-o, I have n't. It's a comparatively new one. I've only had it two years." (*Decides button-holes can be repaired. Smiles cheerfully, and kisses his wife as he passes her to put it aside.*)

MRS. NASH

Retaining him, putting her hands on his coat lapels.

"George, you promised me, solemnly, you would order some new clothes. You haven't a thing that's fit for an old clothes shop!"

GEORGE

"Nonsense, my clothes will do first-rate. Some of them need a little repairing. I'm going to have it done. I guess the tailor can press some of my trousers."

MRS. NASH

Sits down in despair. Vision comes up of Richmond Trevise's trousers and their perfect creases. Determines to make a stand. Firmly.

"George, Bell and Poole both have shops here, on the Rue de Rivoli. We go to-morrow together."

GEORGE

Too absorbed to reply. Has carried another coat to the window.

MRS. NASH

"Do you hear, George?"

GEORGE (*murmurs contentedly*)

"That one is better than I thought it was; guess I 'll put that one on." (*Surveys it admiringly.*) "Pretty good, I call it. Four years old, if it 's a day. Hullo! Some one knocking, Louisa!"

Mrs. Nash feels intuitional premonitions as to who it is. In opening door, perceives intuition was correct. They are the women from Raudnitz. Quickly getting them into bedroom ("Par ici; oui, tout est prêt.") Long conversation in French goes on.

GEORGE (*innocently*)

"Wonder who they are. Good-looking girls, too." (*Another knock.*)

GEORGE.

"Who now?"

Sees two more pretty girls staggering under huge boxes. They smile. He smiles.

MRS. NASH

Hurriedly, with all her executive faculty in full action.

"Ah-h, venez; par ici; de" (*whispers*) "Virot?" (*Screens girls and boxes as they gracefully enter bedroom.*)

GEORGE (*trying to detain his wife*)

"What's up, Lou? What are all those pretty girls being locked up in there for? Having a reception?"

MRS. NASH

With woman's ready art in petty deceit.

"Oh, my dear, only some women from Raudnitz, to take back some old things to be made over. It's my economical year too." (*Smiles her saint's smile.*)

GEORGE

Whose resolves have undergone a change under influence of pretty girls.

"I say, Lou, I guess I'd have one or two new ones, if I were you." (*His Northern Pacific had gone up ten points yesterday, as he saw by this morning's New York Herald.*)

MRS. NASH

Kisses him, but silently. Girls are suspiciously quiet in next room, and one of them speaks English, as she knows. (*Whispers.*)

"George, you ARE a perfect dear!"

George nods, and goes downstairs gayly to order breakfast. Feels the stimulus of a good action.

MRS. NASH

Soliloquizing. Girls and boxes have gone.

"I wonder what he would have said if he'd known eleven gowns have gone out of these rooms this very morning, and only two of them old! One or two new ones? Poor dear! Little he will know how many I *must* have until he sees the bills, in January! Oh, well, it's all for the best."



Chapter VI

TEA at the Ritz. MRS. NASH *precedes her husband down long, finely-lighted corridor. Groups of gayly-dressed ladies seated about little tables. Latter covered with tea-services. Much talking and laughter.* GEORGE *follows his wife with confused, helpless feeling. "Men seem to be scarce," he reflects dazedly, "in this mob of women." Wishes Louisa would stop, somewhere, anywhere. Picking his way between all these petticoats is as bad as going down the church aisle the day he was married.*

Vows Louisa will never catch him here again.

MRS. NASH

To resplendent being in blue coat and many buttons.

"No other table? Oh, well, we'll take this one." (*Seats herself with easy grace. Has given her "new skirt" the right sweep before sitting down. The lines of her back, she knows, are perfect.*)

GEORGE

Holding hat as if at a funeral or wedding, feeling this to be a ceremony of some sort, and hating it.

"I say, Louisa, can't you let me out of this?"

MRS. NASH

Bowing and smiling in several directions at once.

"Why, if there aren't the Blairs!

They never come till June. And who is that lovely creature with them? There are the Grimwalls; they always come early! and the Smallies! and — Oh, George, do look! Isn't that a perfect beauty?"

GEORGE

Looks up angrily at oldish lady dressed like a girl, who is sweeping down aisle.

"That old horror! What are you thinking of, Lou?" (*Gasps as his wife gives his arm a sudden nudge. The "horror" is upon them.*)

Mrs. Nash rises with much precipitation.

Oldish pink-and-white lady (*barely stopping*).

"Ah-h, Mrs. Nash, over already? Your pretty daughter well, I hope?"

MRS. NASH

In a voice not new to her husband — a mixed tone, in which surprise, elation, gratitude, and desire to charm struggle for utterance.

"Oh, dear Lady de Vivian! how kind of you! Darling May —"

Lady de Vivian has moved on. Mrs. Nash in her excitement has dropped her new gold bag, her gloves, boa, and has knocked over George's new silk hat. Skirts submerge hat as she sinks into back of chair. Face reflects beatitude.

MRS. NASH

"Oh, George, was n't it good of her? She always remembers May; and how really too nice of her to stop and ask."

GEORGE

"Who is the old lady, anyway?"

MRS. NASH (*in aggrieved tone*)

"Old lady? That, my dear George, is Lady Georgina de Courcy de Vivian."

GEORGE

Dryly; has met his wife before in this state.

"I see — English and a title! She might paint a foot deeper than she does, and she'd be still the real thing, eh? Well, what does this man want?"

MRS. NASH

To waiter, still in confused tones.

"Tea and toast, — the muffins toasted, you know. And, George?"

GEORGE

"No tea. Scotch whiskey and soda."
(*Gloomily resigns himself to his fate.*)

MRS. NASH

Aroused to her sense of duty.

"George, really you ought to remember what the doctor—" (*Changes tone and face as large shape suddenly looms up before her.*) "Ah, Judge, you here? Well, Mrs. Goodman is breaking you in well. Won't you sit down?" (*Makes a place for the Judge close to her.*) "I wish she'd take Mr. Nash in hand."

JUDGE GOODMAN (*smiling genially*)

"What have you been doing, sir? Been running off to the Folies Bergère, or to see 'La Feria' at the Exhibition?"

GEORGE

Feeling like another man. Takes to the Judge uncommonly.

"No-o, we're putting off that misery as long as possible." (*They all laugh.*)

MRS. NASH (*pouring tea prettily*)

"Have you and Mrs. Goodman been yet?"

THE JUDGE

"Yes, we've spent the day there." (*Heaves a deep sigh. Shakes himself as if to shake off fatigue.*)

MRS. NASH

"Was it as bad as all that?"

THE JUDGE

"Oh, well, they're all about alike, these exhibitions. I saw the first one years ago, and made up my mind never to go through another, and this is my fifth!"

They laugh heartily.

GEORGE

Liking the Judge better every minute. Finds him the right sort.

"Well, I suppose we go to Exhibi-

tions as we do to church — with the idea that it's good for us."

MRS. NASH

"George!" (*Colors, as handsome, youngish old man with tired eyes and perfectly fitting clothes comes up to her.*) "Oh, how do you do, Mr. Trevise? Your mother? She would like to see me? Why, of course, I'll go over to her." (*Excuses herself prettily and crosses gallery, conscious of many remarks about her "new" black and white.*)

Silence between the two men.

THE JUDGE

"So this is your first trip, Mr. Nash?"

GEORGE

"Yes. I see now I ought to have come before."

THE JUDGE (*in tone of respect*)

"Well, a man who carries the Kalamazoo and Topeka on his shoulders can't expect much fun in life!"

GEORGE

Carrying off compliment lightly.

"Oh, I guess we're all about alike. We all work too hard. Sitting on the Bench all day can't be any too easy."

THE JUDGE (*jocosely*)

"Well, judging one's fellows is easier than controlling them, I've always found. By the way, how many men are there in the Kalamazoo?"

GEORGE (*modestly*)

"About twenty thousand."

Pause, during which Judge reflects that all he had heard of Nash was n't

any too much. Makes up his mind to see more of him.

THE JUDGE

"By the way, if you have n't anything to do to-morrow, what do you say to coming with me to the Marais?"

GEORGE

Wrinkling his brow, flushes slightly; wishes he had looked it up in Baedeker.

"I don't know where it is, nor just what it is; but I 'm your man, Judge."

They laugh, and talk about foreign politics.

MRS. NASH

Returns. Manner visibly excited. Absent-mindedly pours tea into milk-jug.

"Gracious! what am I doing, George? Such news! I'm all upset. Richmond Trevise *is* going to marry Maud King,

after all! They were engaged yesterday; cabled to all the papers in America before tea, and had decided everything before dinner!"

THE JUDGE

"Pretty quick work, I should call it."

MRS. NASH (*easily*)

"Oh, well, you see, as he has n't a penny, and she 's worth millions, there was n't anything to wait for." (*A pause.*) "What are you both laughing at?"

GEORGE

"Nothing. I was only reflecting. We did n't do it in just that way, Louisa."

MRS. NASH

"Oh, well, George, we were such babies."

THE JUDGE

"And now-a-days it is only the wise and the old who marry, — Eiffel Towers and money-bags."

MRS. NASH

"Judge, how severe! Tall girls are all the rage. Dear me! here comes Mrs. Gailey. Ah, Mrs. Gailey, how do you do? How well you are looking!"

MRS. GAILEY

Though forty, is pretty, looks thirty in picture hat and fluffy gown. Beams on Mrs. Nash and two gentlemen.

"How are you, *dear?*" (*Gives Mrs. Nash little squeeze.*) "How good it is to see you! What do you think has happened?" (*Still holds Mrs. Nash fast by both hands, gazing at her intently.*)

MRS. NASH

"You 're not engaged, too?"

MRS. GAILEY (*with scorn*)

"Engaged? No, indeed! Guess again."

MRS. NASH

"You 've had another offer!" (*To gentlemen*) "You must know men propose to Mrs. Gailey daily, hourly! It takes up all her time — just to refuse them. They 've worn out two electric bells. Mrs. Gailey — Judge Goodman; my husband, Mr. Nash."

The gentlemen rise and bow. Mrs. Gailey and Judge Goodman exchange quick telegraphic glances. Both look away. Mrs. Gailey seems to be passing under a transient cloud.

MR. NASH

Thinks Mrs. Gailey rather high-colored, the dashing sort, but likes her "go;" offers chair with much gallantry.

"I hope Mrs. Gailey won't forget to tell us what *did* happen to her."

MRS. GAILEY

Recovers her buoyancy. Radiantly, to both gentlemen.

"Why, I've just been insulted, on the Boulevards, a minute ago!"

MRS. NASH

With slightly envious tone, to gentlemen.

"Now she's perfectly happy. She's been waiting two years for that!"

All laugh except George; the Judge, heartily. Again looks meaningly at Mrs. Gailey, who begins to ogle him with manifest intention to capture and subdue.

GEORGE

Colors slightly. Feels he must administer some slight rebuke. Fears Louisa is getting into dangerous company.

"I thought our American ladies had taught these Frenchmen to treat women on the streets with respect."

MRS. NASH

Realizes how prudish and old-fashioned George is, and, she fears, always will be.

"Oh-h, they show us respect enough, when we look American. The great thing is not to look it, but to look French." (*Ladies nod intelligently.*)

GEORGE

Blazing into patriotism.

"The right sort of Americans don't; they want to look what they are, — true American ladies!"

MRS. GAILEY

Her big eyes brought to a focus upon George's case. They blaze upon him softly.

"What a pity you are married, and happily!" (*Light laughter, except from George.*)

GEORGE

Beginning to dislike her. Finds her too big-eyed, too staring.

"Sorry to disagree with you, Mrs. Gailey, but I 've never ceased to rejoice over Mrs. Nash's choice of a husband."

MRS. GAILEY

Recognizing in George the sort that never will admit her own immense fascination.

"Oh, your marriage is ideal, of course! But as a rule there 's nothing like mar-

riage for a man, it makes him so delightfully immoral. But, of course, there are exceptions." (*Stops suddenly, as she catches the Judge's eagle glance. Rises hastily. Small, dissipated-looking man, with very smart clothes and wearied face, passes by.*) "Oh, I 'm afraid I must go now, some friends are waiting. Au revoir, Mrs. Nash; so glad to have met you, Judge, Mr. Nash." (*Sweeps off, and is joined by diminutive specimen.*)

THE JUDGE

Following her with his glance.

"So that is poor Gailey's widow."

MRS. NASH

"Why, do you know her?"

THE JUDGE

"At one time I heard a good deal of her. Let me see, first Simmons married her, and I made the will. Then just

before he died Mrs. Chipson thought her attentions to Chipson called for explanation — in court — and then Gailey married her just at the right moment."

GEORGE (*fiercely*)

"How in the world did you come to know such a woman, Louisa?"

MRS. NASH (*easily*)

"Oh-h, no one believes any of those stories — over here. She goes everywhere, and knows every one. Her dinners are the best in Paris."

GEORGE

"And her morals the worst!"

MRS. NASH

"George! What are you talking about? *She* never allows herself to be talked about. No one is more discreet; why, every one says she's going to get Lord Wintergone, after all!"

GEORGE

"Is that he?"

MRS. NASH

"Yes, he's always with her; we're expecting the announcement daily now."

GEORGE

"We? Really, Louisa, I must forbid —"

MRS. NASH (*talking very quickly*)

"Oh, here's Mrs. Rich! How do you do, Mrs. Rich? You want us for dinner the 8th? How kind of you! I promised George we would n't go out, this year; he's off on a rest cure, but I must go to you. Good-bye, the 8th."

Mrs. Rich nods and is off. The two men exchange sympathetic looks.

THE JUDGE

"Well, Nash, you 're in for it."

GEORGE

"Oh, Lord!"

MRS. NASH (*coquettishly*)

"Now, Judge, I can't have you coming into my family and sowing revolutionary principles. Oh-h, here 's your wife; she 'll keep you in order."

MRS. GOODMAN

Sitting down heavily — she is a large woman.

"I 've been watching you. You 're altogether too lively over here. By the way, Judge, Mrs. Rich wants us for the 8th."

Everybody laughs.

MRS. GOODMAN

"What are you all laughing at? Well, I 'll give you some more food for laughter. I 've just ordered a dinner for twelve

here the 10th, and three of you are invited without further notification, as the funeral notices put it."

THE JUDGE (*groans*)

MRS. GOODMAN

"William! This dinner is given for Mr. and Mrs. Nash."

THE JUDGE (*manner changes*)

"Maria, you sometimes give me proofs of your intelligence. I was just thinking we ought to celebrate Mr. Nash's arrival in a becoming manner. Who are you going to have to meet them?"

MRS. GOODMAN (*counting her fingers*)

"The Ex-Secretary of the Interior and his wife. I saw her yesterday. They can come."

THE JUDGE

"That 's all right."

MRS. GOODMAN

"And the Parvenu Redmunds."

THE JUDGE

Gives Nash a swift look. To his wife, tartly.

"Why do you have them?"

Mrs. Goodman and Mrs. Nash exchange significant glances.

MRS. GOODMAN

"My dear, they go everywhere, over here."

THE JUDGE (*severely*)

"Well, there should be one house, at least, to which they should not go, my dear."

MRS. NASH

Wishing to smooth matters.

"Oh, come, Judge! You must n't sit in judgment on us, all the time. Remember how many of those you 've condemned on earth, you 'll find in heaven, and with bigger harps perhaps than yours, too!" (*They all laugh. Turning to George*) "Come, dear, it 's getting late, and I promised to take Mrs. Trevise's box at the Opera to-night."

They take leave, bowing gayly. On her way down to the door Mrs. Nash is only stopped five times by new meetings and greetings. As they enter carriage Mrs. Nash takes out engagement book.

MRS. NASH (*writing swiftly*)

"The 22d, to-morrow, luncheon at Voisin's. Paquin at 4. Tea at 5, with

Mrs. Blair — did you see her, George? that woman with the dark eyes, she is considered such a beauty! I 'll bet my head, though, she makes up. 23d, Breakfast at Nobles — partie carrée. 24th. What was it for the 24th? Oh, yes, dinner in the Exhibition grounds. 25th. Dinner at Armenonville — "

GEORGE (*interrupting*)

"Good heavens, Louisa, you don't expect me to go to all those!"

MRS. NASH

"And why not? I 'm sure I don't see what else you have to do."

GEORGE (*half angry*)

"Oh, nothing, of course. I was under the mistaken apprehension that this was a rest cure!"

MRS. NASH (*still writing vigorously*)

"Well, are n't we going to Carlsbad? There 'll be nothing else to do there but to rest, will there?"



Chapter VII

EXHIBITION. MRS. NASH *enters drawing-room. Finds it perfectly dark. Presses electric button. Light discovers her very smart indeed. Pale-blue lady's cloth, black-and-white straw hat with white chiffon knots. Ornaments, turquoise and pearl dog-collar. Looks quickly around.*

MRS. NASH

"George!" (*No answer. Moves towards bedroom; also dark. Lights that up. Looks towards bed. Goes back to*

drawing-room ; consults clock.) "What! seven! And George not here! Where can he be? He 's been gone since eleven. And here I was, dreading to come in for fear he 'd been worrying about me." (*Takes off hat, gloves ; seats herself.*) "Well, I must say I am glad to sit down. What a long day it has been!" (*Silence. It becomes oppressive.*) "I wonder where George is! I 'm beginning to believe he 's lost his way; unless he 's come home with the Judge, he 'll never find his way about, and there won't be a cab to be had at this hour." (*Rings bell. Waiter appears.*) "Just go to Judge Goodman's room and ask if the Judge is at home yet, or, wait." (*Scribbles message on card.*)

Waiter disappears. She fusses about till his return. On reappearing he presents note. Exit waiter.

MRS. NASH (*reads*)

"'Dear Mrs. Nash, I left your good husband at three o'clock. He said he was going home. Yours obediently, A. G. Goodman.'" (*Starts as clock strikes the quarter.*) "Three o'clock, and it 's now after seven!" (*With the quiet of despair.*) "Something has happened to him, of course." (*Walks about excitedly. Tries to regain her self-control.*) "I must keep cool, and be ready for ANYTHING." (*Sits down, and holds her hands over her heart.*) "If he is n't here by eight, I 'll ask the Judge to notify the police."

Has visions of seeing George brought home on a stretcher; of finding him, after countless false alarms, in a ditch, almost unrecognizable, where he had been left for dead by thieves; or of

recognizing him, later, at the morgue, where, horrors! he is —

GEORGE

Enters with his hat on. Looks somewhat elated; general air of festivity.

"Hello, Louisa, you here, little girl?" (*Tries to kiss her.*)

MRS. NASH

Starting up. Feeling her most sacred feelings have been trifled with.

"George Nash, will you please tell me where you have been, at this hour?"

GEORGE (*astounded*)

"At this hour? Why, it 's only seven o'clock."

MRS. NASH

"Nearly half-past. Where have you been? You 've nearly frightened me to death."

GEORGE

With continued air of gayety.

"I have? Would n't have done that for the world." (*Tries to put his arm about her.*)

MRS. NASH

Retreating, with great dignity.

"All this time you have n't told me where you have been, George."

GEORGE (*with infantile imprudence*)

"Why, the Judge and I —"

MRS. NASH (*icily*)

"He 's just written down to say he left you at three."

GEORGE

With quick rebound, after trapped feeling.

"So he did, and then I went off by myself."

MRS. NASH

"May I learn in what direction you went off; or can't you — ?"

GEORGE (*pulling himself together*)

"Well, the truth is, I did a downright mean thing, Louisa, — I went it alone, to the Exhibition, without the Judge. I 've been there ever since. I tell you it is *great*."

PAUSE

MRS. NASH

Has a short, fierce struggle. Gives a little gasp, short hysterical laugh, and cries, as she flings her arms about her husband's neck.

"Oh, George, that 's where I 've been all day — and I just hated to tell you!"

TABLEAU

L. of C.

Chapter VIII

GEORGE AT THE THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS

MORNING. Hotel Continental. Mr. Nash tiptoeing into darkened bed-chamber.

GEORGE (*sympathetically*)

"Do you feel any better, dear?"

VOICE

Very faint, from pillow.

"No-o; rather worse, if anything."

GEORGE

Bumping against chair in the dark.

"Is n't there something I can do for you?"

MRS. NASH

"Don't joggle, it hurts my head."

GEORGE

Afraid to move, though lost in middle of room.

"Shan't I send in Marie?"

MRS. NASH

"Ye-es, later. First — Oh, dear! how it throbs! First you must see if Mrs. Goodman can take my place to-night."

GEORGE

"Your place?"

MRS. NASH (*in fainting voice*)

"Oh-h, can't you remember *anything?* We — I asked Miss King and Trevise for the theatre, the Français, to-night."

GEORGE (*with sinking sensation*)

"The deuce you did!"

MRS. NASH

"George, I 'm far too ill to have you swearing at me. I shall be worse, now, if I have to go on talking."

GEORGE

Feeling he has been a ruffian.

"Well, just tell me, dear, what I am to do."

MRS. NASH

"See Mrs. Goodman. Ask her if she will matronize them. If she can't, write Mrs. Rich."

GEORGE

Forgetting his remorse as ruffian.

"Mrs. Rich! I don't know the woman from Adam, nor Miss King, nor any of them, except Trevise, and he 's an ass!"

MRS. NASH (*in her palest voice*)

"Don't be brutal, George, I 'm not strong enough to bear it."

GEORGE

Relapsing into contrite mood.

"It 's all right, Lou; I 'll go, only" (*bright idea strikes him*) "why not send the box to Miss King, and let them — "

MRS. NASH

Regrets she is too ill to tell George how hopeless she feels his social education to be.

"Haven't you learned yet that young people don't go about by themselves, even when they are engaged?"

GEORGE

"Young? Trevise is forty, if he 's a minute, and that King girl — gracious! Louisa, don't look like that. Brace up, little woman; give me my marching orders, and then get your sleep."

MRS. NASH

With the voice of a dying saint.

"Send the carriage — half-past seven — for Miss King, pick up Mrs. Goodman or Mrs. Rich, take them to box number nine; send number to Trevise's hotel, the Chatham, and — now let me sleep!"

George closes door softly. Stands in middle of big drawing-room. Derives no comfort from Louis XV. furniture or pink azaleas. Thinks gloomily on his misfortunes. Fifteen minutes before, on discovering one of his wife's headaches was coming on, had made engagement with Judge for a "night off." Smashes hat over his eyes. Ejaculates the usual monosyllable.

AT THEATRE

Play: "Bérénice." — Racine's Two Hundredth Anniversary.

Scene: In Théâtre Français before the older building was destroyed by fire.

George in back of box. The latter, though supposed to seat six, is too small for three. George as host, of course, takes worst seat. Has managed, thus far, to see quarter of the opposite side of the house, a forest of feather-trimmed hats, and Miss King's shoulder-blades. By standing up, can see part of stage. Murmur of voices on stage, close air; non-stimulating effect of Miss King's shoulder-blades produce soporific effect. Dozes.

Mrs. Goodman (*at end of first act*)

"How fine Bartet was!"

GEORGE

Feeling he must say something, as Miss King and Trevise are looking at the house.

"Ah, always is, is n't he?"

TREVISE

Smiles sardonically. He and Miss King exchange meaning glance.

"Oh, that 's a good one, I say!" *He and Miss King laugh rudely.*

MRS. GOODMAN

Likes George, and is sorry he is out of it in French and art matters generally.

"Oh, you did n't see a programme, did you, Mr. Nash?"

GEORGE

Feels he would like to kick Trevise, though not knowing precisely for what. Pointedly, to Mrs. Goodman.

"It would n't enlighten me. I fear

Racine and all the rest are a trifle beyond me."

Miss King (*to no one in particular*)

"Shall we go to the Foyer?"

All rise and pass out of box. Mrs. Goodman pilots George to Foyer. Shows him statues of Rachel, Voltaire, etc. Statues interest him. Examines them carefully. Trevise and Miss King move quickly away.

Mrs. Goodman

After good-naturedly answering all George's questions.

"And now, suppose we go to the Café, outside, and you give me a 'bock.'"

George (*statues lose all interest*)

"Just won't I; which way?"

After "bocks." He and Mrs. Goodman lean over balcony overlooking Place du Théâtre Français.

GEORGE

"Great idea, this! Walking about, getting beer, and some fresh air. I begin to think the Théâtre Français has n't been overwritten up, after all!"

MRS. GOODMAN (*slyly*)

"How about the 'Moulin Rouge' and the 'Folies Bergère'? Rather more to your taste, I fancy."

GEORGE

"Oh-h, the Judge told on me, did he?"

MRS. GOODMAN (*laughing lightly*)

"Oh, he tells me his little crimes; his worst ones I find out for myself. By the way, he sent you a message. He 'll

be at the 'Moulin Rouge' at 12.30. Nice place for two heads of family!"

GEORGE

"Don't you think it better for us to sow a wild oat, tamely, at our age, than at Trevise's, for instance? He's so old, he makes me feel like a débutante!"

MRS. GOODMAN

"Oh, all the young men of this generation are born old."

GEORGE

"My boy was n't, and shan't be."

MRS. GOODMAN

"You can't turn the clock back. This century clock is a fast one."

GEORGE

"Yes, our clock went slower and truer. What 's that?" (*Hears gong.*)

MRS. GOODMAN

"That 's to tell us that the curtain will rise in five minutes."

GEORGE

"Oh, Lord!"

They both laugh.

Curtain rises on empty stage. Classic scene in background. Stage centre filled with bust of Racine on pedestal, crowned with wreaths. Mounet Sully enters in evening dress.

GEORGE

Hilariously, to Mrs. Goodman.

"Good! Here 's the management come to announce the play can't go on!"

MRS. GOODMAN (*whispers quickly*)

"It 's Mounet Sully. He is to read the 'Discours' — the speech of the evening."

Miss King turns icy, supercilious glance upon George. Trevise laughs again, brutally, in George's face. George thinks he really must kick him, once the ladies are out of the way.

George conscientiously tries to catch a word here and there of the "speech." Understands nothing. Sees only half of Mounet Sully. Likes that half, and wishes he could see more. After trying for half an hour to see him as a whole, sits down in despair to inspection of Miss King's wedge-like shoulder-blades. Pities Trevise, although he despises him. Tiring of compassionate mood, tries to see pretty girl again in opposite box. Pretty girl gone. Envies her. In despair, composes himself once more for slumber. Concludes Théâtre Français is as dull as church — only hotter. Dozes. A vacancy.

Mrs. Goodman's Voice *out of a fog*

"Perfectly delightful, was n't he?"

GEORGE

Shakes himself, and knocks into Miss King's chignon.

"Oh, beg pardon!" (*Thinking to make things pleasant.*) "Miss King, now, she understood every word, I dare-say."

MISS KING (*stares and mutters*)

"Awh!" (*To Trevise, barely an aside.*) "Really, he is too impossible!"

TREVISE

Who has "been over" in England four years.

"What can you expect? They 're all like that, these Americans!"

THEATRE DOOR

MISS KING (*to Trevise*)

"You 're coming, are n't you? I 'm going on to the Smallies."

TREVISE

"Oh, I fear I can't, you know; there 's a man's party at the Ritz — "

MISS KING

Suddenly developing temper.

"Oh-h, they 're always late, those men's parties. You can perfectly well take me on first; here 's the carriage!"

Trevise offers arm sulkily and looks all he is mentally saying.

GEORGE

Pleasantly, to Mrs. Goodman.

"Shall we drop you, first, at the Continental?"

MRS. GOODMAN

Quickly remembering George's rare bachelor freedom.

"No-o; I also am going to the Smallies; you need n't come. The Judge is waiting for you now."

They drive off after distant "good-nights" from the two frigid, though affianced, ones.

GEORGE (*alone, ecstatically*)

"What a wife the Judge has! A woman in ten thousand!" (*Hails cabman. Gives orders with amazing fluency.*) "Moulin Rouge! Vite! donnez bon pour-boire!"

Chapter IX

THE EMBASSY BALL

I

GEORGE

Enters hurriedly in penitent mood.

"By Jove! little woman, I did n't mean to keep you waiting. But the Judge and I were caught out at Vincennes, looking at the Machinery Section."

MRS. NASH

Pushing her husband down caressingly into easiest chair.

"You poor dear! Don't bother to explain. I know just how you feel. Hot, and such dust! Would n't you

like, now, above all things, a Remsen Cooler?"

GEORGE

Opens his eyes at his wife's face before kissing it.

"Just would n't I, though! But there 's no such thing."

Mrs. Nash laughs gayly, goes to bedroom, unlocks wardrobe. Reappears with several bottles, a lemon, some sugar, ice in a bowl, and a cocktail shaker.

GEORGE

Jumps up as if electrified.

"Where, in Heaven's name—?"

MRS. NASH

With her most coquettish battery of smiles turned on her husband's mystified, radiant face.

"Oh-h, squirrels are n't the only ones who have secret hoards. I knew you 'd

come in tired; that Exhibition exhausts *me* in an hour." (*Begins shaking mixture.*)

George fans himself indolently with his handkerchief. Leans his head back once more on pink satin sofa-pillow. Listens to music of shaker with rapt smile. Looks at his wife adoringly.

GEORGE

"Lou, you 're a good little woman!" (*Reaches out arm to clasp her to him.*)

MRS. NASH

Sinks into curve of his elbow. Leans lovingly against him. Continues vigorous shaking.

"Well, you know, you 're not half a bad sort yourself, as our English friends put it."

Pause, during which George wonders why Lou can't always be in this mood.

Surveys her with increasing rapture. She is turning out beverage.

GEORGE

After first long draught.

"By Jove, Lou, you have n't lost your touch! That is the best, the only real *drink* I 've had since I 've been over!"

MRS. NASH

Offers him large palm-leaf fan. Perches on arm of sofa. Toys with his moustache.

"What do you say, dear, to dining in our room to-night? Then you need n't dress until —" (*Checks herself quickly; smiles, to herself, mysteriously.*)

GEORGE

Who only sees smile, again wonders what has "come over" his wife. She does and says just the right thing.

"That will be perfect! The noise,

those lights, the music, downstairs, it all gets on my nerves these hot nights."

MRS. NASH

Springing up, opening blinds and windows hastily.

"Oh! It is n't really hot! It 's just heavenly June weather. There! the breeze is delicious, coming across the gardens. Come! the balcony is delightfully cool at this early twilight hour."

GEORGE

Carrying second Remsen Cooler to window. Sits down between balcony and window ledge.

"Yes, it is fine. Those trees and the light behind, and — and the sunset is lovely, is n't it?"

Feels combined influence of sunset and Remsen Cooler. Sentimentally

holds his wife's hand. Louisa returns pressure, and continues smiling. George is too happy to wonder "why."

Dinner is served. Shaded candles. Breeze now coming in finely across Tuileries tree-tops.

GEORGE (*with enthusiasm*)

"Cold bouillon? Just the thing! Who ordered this dinner?"

MRS. NASH (*mentally*)

"If I can only keep him in this mood!" (*Aloud*) "There's only one person I can think of, who has had seventeen years' experience of your tastes."

GEORGE

Ecstatically, as waiter brings in silver cooler.

"And champagne frappée, too! Why, Lou, this is ideal! How did you happen

to think of anything so perfect? Let 's always dine up here!"

MRS. NASH

With mysterious smile.

"Oh-h, if we dined alone every night it would n't seem so nice; besides, it would n't be quite fair to the Goodmans. But to-night—"

GEORGE (*all innocence*)

"Out to-night, are they? The Judge did n't say anything about a dinner. Although, yes, now I do remember he made mysterious allusions to meeting us later." (*Suddenly views his wife with suspicion.*) "But I told him we had nothing on for to-night."

Mrs. Nash still smiles, but concludes this is not the right moment to broach the great subject. George looks too tired as yet.

Pause, during which George's suspicions are quieted. And pâté de foie gras in aspic fully engrosses his attention.

GEORGE

Again light-heartedly.

"Yes, I told him, as we'd been out ten nights running, I thought a man who had been sent over on a rest cure might be allowed one night off."

MRS. NASH (*nervously*)

"Nonsense! No one has enjoyed going more than you. Why, last night —"

GEORGE

"Oh, Coquelin is great enough to make even a sleepy man enjoy himself."

A pause, during which she concludes this is the right moment.

MRS. NASH

"Oh, well, who knows but what to-night you 'll be even more amused." (*Eyes her husband anxiously, though still smiles archly.*)

GEORGE

Lays down knife and fork with despairing gesture.

"To-night? What do you mean, Louisa? Surely you 're not going to drag me out!"

MRS. NASH (*soothingly*)

"No-o. No, dear, of course. I told them I did n't believe you 'd feel up to going."

GEORGE

"Them? Going? And where?"

MRS. NASH (*still softly*)

"You need n't get so excited, dear; it 's very bad for your digestion. Be-

cause, I 've already told you I don't intend to go unless you feel exactly like it."

George groans. But stays his despair with full glass of "The Widow — Extra Dry."

MRS. NASH

Now turning on persuasive stop.

"Of course, as it is the ball of the year — "

GEORGE (*exploding*)

"A ball ! ! ! "

MRS. NASH

"The Embassy Ball." (*With reproachful severity.*) "And as ardent a patriot as you, I should think, would wish to go to a ball given by his own representative; that is, if he is lucky enough to get an invitation."

GEORGE

With flicker of hope.

"But he is n't, you see. We 've had no cards."

MRS. NASH

Rises, and extracts two huge white cards from secret drawer of escritoire. Holds them up triumphantly.

"Have n't we? Two weeks ago!"

GEORGE

"And you hid them from me?"

MRS. NASH

Seeing waiter is out of room, slips her arm around George's neck.

"Yes; so you would n't be bothered to decide — until — until" (*kisses him softly on brow*) "this very night."

GEORGE

Feels resolution melting within him.

"Oh, well, little woman, if you've set your heart on going."

MRS. NASH (*drawing back*)

"I've set my heart? Not a bit of it. I'm quite ready to stop at home and go dully to sleep," (*sighs*) "if you wish."

GEORGE (*heroically*)

"Nonsense! I'm not as tired as all that. We'll go, and make a night of it. But you — have you the right thing? I presume it's a grand affair, is n't it?"

MRS. NASH

Not daring to betray her joy; quietly.

"Come; while we're waiting for coffee; come and see."

Leads him into bed-chamber. On top of bed George sees a vast foamy mass of silver, tulle, and rose-leaves. Mrs. Nash shows him "the waist"—a bit of tulle, sparkling with light, of the size of his pocket handkerchief, with no sleeves. She, ejaculating: "Is n't that just *too* exquisite? And it fits!!!"

George ponders. Looks suddenly, with great intelligence, at foamy mass. Remembers "Remsen Cooler," "champagne frappée," the late, scarcely digested dinner, low lights, palm-leaf fan. Looks now at his wife as he does on those rare occasions when a business rival gets the better of him. Puts his arm around her as he bursts into laughter.

GEORGE

"Come, we'll have our coffee, and I my cigar, and then we'll go to the

Embassy Ball, and I 'll introduce you as the cleverest little diplomat in Europe."

II

AT THE EMBASSY

Mrs. Nash has a sense of floating through waves of rapture. She is going up the great staircase between rows of palms, laquais, garlanded balustrades, and heaps of other satin and tulle trains. But none are so "new" as hers — that she sees with immense satisfaction. The bursts of music, the lights, the plush coats and white calves of the footmen, the gayety, sparkle, and animation of the scene excite in her the feeling that, at last, she is in the right place. She always knew she was born for just such great occasions. Years seem to have slipped off from her. Is wearing her

twenty-eight-year-old expression and complexion.

MRS. NASH

In tone of great elation.

"Oh-h, is n't it just splendid, George?" (*Immediately imagines herself as the coming queen of the scene.*)

GEORGE

More quietly, but with his eyes moving quickly, taking it all in.

"Ye-es, it's a fine sight, and splendidly done. Ah-h, Mr. Grandison, you here? How are you? Thought you never came to balls!"

Shakes hands with tall, lean man with an enormous head, and weary, but luminous eyes, who looks like a "somebody."

GRANDISON

With a touch of deference in his greeting.

"Ah, Mr. Nash, glad to see you here. I did n't know you were over." (*They shake hands, and are parted by waves of satin trains.*)

MRS. NASH (*petulantly*)

"Why, George, I did n't know you knew the Grandisons." (*Mrs. Grandison is now passing them, and overhears.*)

GEORGE

"Well, I don't. I only know Grandison."

Mrs. Grandison smiles. Concludes Mr. Nash, whom her husband always quotes as the "real king of all railroad kings," is a clever man. Shall ask James to introduce him. Sweeps Mrs. Nash with glance of expert social mag-

nate. "Pretty, and bright-looking, but too well dressed, and *much* too low," is the great lady's verdict. Her own black lace gown has survived one New York, one Washington, and a London season. She now handles it as if it were a relic.

MRS. NASH

With her eyes now fixed upon "relic," Mrs. Grandison being ahead of them.

"Why, George, I thought the Grandisons were enormously rich!"

GEORGE

"So they are."

MRS. NASH

Readjusting diamond necklace doing duty as shoulder-strap.

"She dresses as if she were a poor relation."

GEORGE (*laughing*)

"Well, she can afford to; she's at the top, and knows it."

Mrs. Nash feels first fly entering her pot of honey. Wishes she were there, at the very top, and thus need n't scramble and "hustle," and snub and consent to be snubbed, any more. Resolves, with her foot on the last stair, that when she goes back to New York she'll not let the Newborns and those stuck-up Kings and all that set —

MRS. NASH

"Ah, there's Miss King now! Dear me! She looks bonier than ever in evening dress, does n't she? How are you? Is your mother with you? Ah, Mrs. Trevise, how charming Miss King looks to-night! Pink is so becoming! Oh! Mr. Trevise. I was just telling your —

well — your future mother-in-law how lovely the fiancée looks to-night. There 's nothing like happiness for a beautifier. Ah ! it 's our turn, is it ? "

They squeeze through crowd at door. Hear their names called out, to which no one listens except the Ambassador and Ambassadress.

Ambassador greets George, to Mrs. Nash's immense amazement, with special and distinguishing attention. She even catches the words, " Come back later, I shall want to present you ; " then crowd closes in about her.

MRS. NASH

Having freed herself and George from the mass of rich toilettes, uniforms, etc., circling about host and hostess. Explodes with excitement.

" Why, George, you never told me ! "

GEORGE

Eying the scene with quiet interest.

"Told you what, my dear?"

MRS. NASH

"Why, that you knew the Ambassador!"

GEORGE

"Oh! have n't I? I 've known him — let me see — ever since '79, when he was Governor of Illinois."

Mrs. Nash's attention now concentrated on Mrs. Goodman's new Empress Eugénie gown. Sees at a glance that the style makes a stout woman look so much stouter — and older. Only thin, slender women "can stand" those low bodices and flounced fronts. Will order one to-morrow, of Worth.

MRS. NASH (*to Mrs. Goodman*)

"Well, here you are at last! How smart you are! really regal, that dress! I had no idea it would be so superb. Is n't she looking beautiful to-night, Judge?"

The Judge once more surveying his wife's generous — too generous — gift to the public of her middle-aged, over-developed charms. Meets her eyes, — the jolly, honest, loyal eyes, — and finds he can't. No, he really can't.

THE JUDGE

Relapses into usual mendacities.

"She 's always beautiful to me, Mrs. Nash. And I know somebody else who is giving us an original, — Nattier, for instance." (*Bows as he administers compliment.*)

Mrs. Nash knows Nattier by name, but can't place him. Is he a modern, or one of the older painters?

MRS. NASH (*coquettishly*)

"Oh, Judge, what a flatterer! All you Southerners — Why, there's young Jannet, the New York celebrity; his portraits are the rage, you know. How do you do, Mr. Jannet?"

Jannet, tall, beautifully dressed, beautifully pale, with beautifully distinguished langorous manner. Is wandering about trying not to see people, but to be seen. Intends to give Mrs. Nash two fingers and pass on.

JANNET

"Oh, how d' you do? Crowded, is n't it?"

MRS. NASH

Slips between Judge Goodman and his wife. Intends Jannet shall release her.

"Oh, you here, too? When did you come over?" (*Attaches herself to painter, who resigns himself, indolently, to capture. He intends freeing himself from her at first opportunity.*)

Mrs. Nash. In seventh heaven, at last! Conscious of looking her best beside so "becoming" a celebrity. He is dark, she fair, and both tall. She will make the circuit of the great rooms with him, — although, of course, she will be stopped every five steps.

MRS. NASH

"Ah, yes, the Kings! That is Miss King, in pink. Why pink, of all things? When did you hear of the engagement?

Out, you say, since May? Ah, Mrs. Gailey!"

JANNET

After comprehensive survey of Mrs. Gailey's attractions. Aside.

"Introduce me."

Mrs. Nash introduces him.

MRS. GAILEY

Fixing intense gaze on painter.

"Mr. Jannet! What an honor! I've been longing to meet you, for *years!* Your first picture, your very first, was a work of genius. Your last —"

Suddenly Mrs. Nash finds herself alone. Jannet and Mrs. Gailey have been swept away, or have swept her away. In any case, she is left stranded. Burst of music makes her feel still more "left."

MRS. NASH (*disconsolately*)

"Where *is* George? I left him by the door. Poor thing, I presume he's still there. Ah, Mr. Trevise! have you seen Mr. Nash?"

TREVISE

Barely stops his nonchalant saunter through the rooms.

"Oh-h, ah-h, ya-as, I believe I did see him. Is n't that he, with those men?"

First Secretary of Legation squeezes past, between ladies' trains and black coats. Laughs and pats Trevise on shoulder. "Those men," my dear boy, "are the Russian Ambassador, the English magnate Lord Waterstock, and the German Ambassador." Moves on.

TREVISE (*insolently*)

"Ah, wonder what Nash is doing among all those swells!"

MRS. NASH

Swallows her own surprise, but not Trevise's impudence; carelessly.

"Oh-h, I daresay some one introduced him. George — Mr. Nash knows our Ambassador. Ah, Judge! Here's Mr. Trevise wondering how Mr. Nash happens to know all those diplomatic grandees he's with, over there."

Trevise slips away after barely nodding to Judge.

JUDGE GOODMAN (*to Trevise's back*)

"Young whelp! Why do you countenance such cads, Mrs. Nash? The young men of our day — Ah-h, Mr. Bluegrass, pleased to meet you. Mrs. Nash, permit me to make you acquainted with Mr. Reckington Bluegrass, President of the Central Kentucky Rail-

road." (*They bow as band bursts into Strauss' waltz.*)

MR. BLUEGRASS (*ponderously*)

"Honored to meet you, Madam! Your husband here to-night?"

MRS. NASH

"Yes." (*With pride.*) "He's over there talking to Lord Waterstock and —"

MR. BLUEGRASS (*to Judge*)

"Goodman, when Mr. Nash has finished with these gentlemen, just present me, will you? Madam, I have the honor to salute you." (*Gives grand bow from the waist and moves away.*)

MRS. NASH (*thinking aloud*)

"I can't imagine what all these people are so crazy to meet George for!"

JUDGE

His eyes twinkling with suppressed humor.

"Mrs. Nash, if I tell you a great secret, — one you've never even suspected, — you won't betray me?"

MRS. NASH

Much excited, wondering if George's "past" is about to come out.

"No, never! I swear."

JUDGE (*bending over*)

"Well, your 'George,' as you call him, is a great man. That is the secret."

MRS. NASH

Recoiling, half disappointed, but mostly sceptical. Who knew George as well as she? And would n't she have known him as great, if he were, REALLY?

"Nonsense; George is clever and —

and in business he has large responsibilities, of course. But great, as great as Mr. Grandison, for instance. Oh dear, no!"

JUDGE

Quietly eying "George" and the thickening group about him.

"Well, some of us think differently. Grandison himself concedes Nash is the greatest organizer of railroads, and controls men better than any man in the United States, and that's the reason why all these swells — Ah, Mr. Bluegrass — Yes, I'll take you up. Just a moment, Mrs. Nash, and I'll look you up again."

Mrs. Nash cannot believe her senses. George a great man! All those people waiting to meet him — and she, *alone!* No. It's all a mistake. George Nash is posing; he's "trying it on." Suddenly

catches sight of George. He is centre of the circle now, in which fine-looking men with silken badges and jewelled orders and uniforms are listening gravely, for "George" is talking. Seems quite at his ease. Looks a trifle flushed; but somehow appears more at home than she had ever seen him. (*Still alone.*) Experiences sudden and complete change of heart. Feels she has never fully "appreciated" her husband before. Lord Waterstock is shaking hands with him now. She moves nearer circle. Collides with Miss King.

MISS KING (*superciliously*)

"Alone, Mrs. Nash?"

MRS. NASH

With novel sensation of wifely pride.

"I 'm looking Mr. Nash up. He has been with Lord Waterstock and the

Russian Ambassador, and —" (*Passes on.*)

MISS KING (*stares*)

"Dear me! That sallow, tired, slouchy-looking man — what do those people see in such a creature?"

GEORGE

Breaking away from group.

"Ah-h, there 's my wife! Excuse me, gentlemen. I see she 's alone!" (*Joins Louisa.*) "Well, little woman, where did you wander off to?"

MRS. NASH

In condition of moral collapse, out of which grows, magically, a new elation. Takes her husband's arm with a feeling that almost borders on deference.

"I 've been —" (*Laughs a little hysterically.*) "Why, I 've been on a little

voyage of discovery." (*Eyes her husband slyly.*)

GEORGE (*innocently*)

"Discovery! What discovery have you made?"

MRS. NASH (*softly*)

"That I've married a great man!"

GEORGE

"Nonsense! Who's been putting such absurd notions into your head? Come, let's go in to supper."

They are soon lost in the crowd. But Mrs. Nash now does not let George out of her sight.

Chapter X

THE LAST DAY IN PARIS

BED-CHAMBER once more darkened. George this time is in among the pillows. His face is a bright orange against the sheets. Mrs. Nash tiptoes about with anxious face. She has forgotten even "how she looks," although the doctor has only just left. Room filled with boxes, bundles, half-open trunks, and tissue-papered trays.

MRS. NASH

"Do you feel a little better, George, dear?"

GEORGE

Eyes closed, but in cheerful tones.

"Oh-h, I 'm all right; it 's all nonsense, the doctor keeping me mewed up like this." (*Feels astonishingly "swimmy" as he talks, though.*)

MRS. NASH

With amazing energy.

"George, you 're to stay 'mewed up,' as you call it, until you are a well man; do you hear?"

GEORGE

"I thought we were to go to-morrow to Carlsbad. The doctor —"

MRS. NASH

With great scorn.

"The doctor — as if the doctor knew you, or your symptoms, as well as I do! Why, I knew, a week ago, you were

coming down with one of your attacks; there, lie perfectly still, and take this." (*Pours mixture from tumbler down her husband's throat.*)

GEORGE

After meekly swallowing something that tastes like pumice-stone, sulphur, and decayed vegetables.

"Well, that ought to kill or cure. It's about the worst—" (*Sudden sensation of drowsiness. During next minutes experiences swirls of thought.*)

The scenes of the past week are vividly, too vividly, reviewed. Sees Exhibition grounds, and the buildings loom up like fiery structures. Sees himself going through section after section. Jewellery, machinery, mountains and grottoes of wine bottles; the unreal ladies in the "Palais de Cos-

tume;" the real ladies he and Louisa Jane meet, later, at luncheon and dinner, "in the grounds;" hears bursts of Hungarian music; sees girl-orchestra — particularly handsome girl-leader "first-violin" at the Munich Beer-Halle — very distinctly; recalls more vaguely dinners at Armenonville and the Terrace at St. Germain, where he felt his first chill; remembers how he "would n't tell Louisa" next day, because of all the "last things" to be done; vision of what those "last things" meant makes him feel very "seedy," even now. The Louvre (the Magazin this time) three hours, or was it thirty? The Bon Marché five, all the afternoon, mostly. Paquin's, for a last "fitting;" the boot-maker; Virot's; back to the Louvre for belt buckle, then to the Palais Royal arcades for "nouveau art" buckle, as the Louvre one "would n't do." Din-

ner at eight for ten; their farewell to Goodmans, etc.; and then a blank! How long since then? A blank now.

TWO HOURS LATER

MRS. NASH

To Judge Goodman, in drawing-room.

"I shall take him to Pillbucster, he 's the greatest authority in Europe."

JUDGE GOODMAN (*anxiously*)

"What does this one say; is he any good? These French doctors — "

MRS. NASH

"Oh-h, Dr. Luck is n't French, he 's American, on his mother's side; everybody goes to him, over here. He thinks that George is just run down, and that Carlsbad — "

THE JUDGE (*forgets himself*)

"Run down? I should think he was! Why, six weeks ago when I first saw him — !"

MRS. NASH

"Oh-h, did you think he looked so badly? Well, you see, he wanted to see Paris, and I, of course, wanted to show him *everything*, as he 'd never been — "

THE JUDGE (*politely but severely*)

"Mrs. Nash, when a man looks as your husband did when he landed, he needs quiet, not another New York season — "

MRS. NASH (*half weeping*)

"Oh, I *do* believe you are right; our men do work too hard; and we get so used to their looking sallow and half

dead — " (*Chokes, and finds she can't go on.*)

THE JUDGE

Changes his opinion about Nash's "silly little wife."

"Oh, I don't say it is as bad as all that, only I'd look after him pretty sharply, if I were you." (*Half jocosely.*) "He's worth saving, you know."

MRS. NASH

With the look of one who is consecrating herself.

"Judge Goodman, he is going to be a well man, if I have to give up *everything* to make him such."

THE JUDGE

Rises. Pats Mrs. Nash's agitated shoulders.

"He'll come round all right, I dare-

say, without you going to extremes of self-sacrifice. I 'll look in later."

(*Exit.*)

Mrs. Nash tiptoes across to bedroom. As she goes, sees herself "giving up" dinners; all balls, of course; Paris, except for clothes; George always taken over instead of May, direct to his cure, with High Alp after-cure, and no "going out" afterwards in New York; no, indeed! Gulps a little as she pictures herself firmly "renouncing" society. She intends to live for her husband and her children hereafter. Will re-furnish morning-room as library, and have George read aloud, evenings. Will have ball-dresses made over into tea-gowns. Gulps once more at second picture of herself as "never going out."

Mrs. Nash (*with emotion*)

"Any better, dear?"

GEORGE

In his usual strong tones.

"Right as a trivet; that stuff has worked wonders. We 'll get off to-morrow, after all."

MRS. NASH

After critically examining his color. Concludes, as he is several shades lighter, the doctor is an alarmist, after all.

(*Mentally.*) "Even if I do give up everything, I should think we might keep the Opera box." (*Aloud.*) "We must wait to hear what the doctor says. Do you realize, George, dear, how you are going to be nursed and coddled hereafter?" (*Kisses him tenderly, with a break in her voice.*)

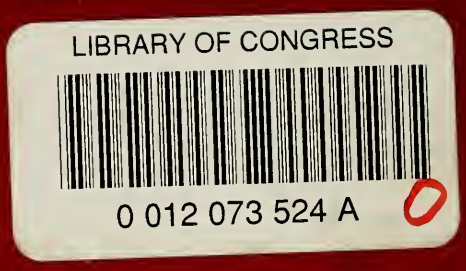
GEORGE

In his most cheerful tone.

"It 'll be just as you say, Louisa — you 're the general, you know!" (*Embraces her.*)

THE END

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